

SEEKING RICHLY REWARDED

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A SERMON

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*“The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger:
but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.”*

Psalms 34:10

THE young lions are very strong, they are as yet in the freshness of their youth, and yet their strength does not always suffice to keep them supplied. The young lions are very crafty, they understand how to waylay their game and leap upon them with a sudden spring at unawares, and yet, with all their craftiness, they howl for hunger in the wood. The young lions are very bold and furious, very unscrupulous, they are not stayed from any deed of depredation, and yet for all that, freebooters as they are, they sometimes lack, and suffer hunger.

These are just the type of many men in the world, they are strong men, they are cunning men, they are thoroughly up to the times—smart, sharp men. If anybody could be well supplied, one would think they should be. But how many of them go to bankruptcy and ruin, and with all their cunning, they are too cunning, and with all their unscrupulousness, they manage at last, full often, to come to an ill end. They do lack and suffer hunger.

But here are the people of God—they are regarded as simpletons, such simpletons as to seek the Lord, instead of adopting the maxims of universal worldly wisdom, namely, “Seek yourself,” they have given up what is called the first law of human nature, namely, self-seeking, self-pleasing, self-serving, and have come to seek the Lord, to seek to magnify Him.

And what comes of their simplicity? “They shall not want any good thing.” Notwithstanding their want of power, their want of cunning, and the check which conscience often puts upon them, so that they cannot do what others can to enrich themselves, yet for all that, they have a fortune ensured to them: they “shall not want any good thing.”

Let us look at this text now, and together consider it thus, first, *the seeking of the Lord which is here intended*, and then following upon that, *the promise that is given upon such seeking*.

I. THE SEEKING OF THE LORD HERE INTENDED.

We must be particular and very precise about this. The promise is so rich that we wish to win it fully, but we do not wish to be dishonest. We would not take a word of God that does not belong to us, lest we should deceive ourselves, and be guilty of robbing God. We must go carefully and jealously here, and must search ourselves to see if in very deed and truth we are such as really seek the Lord.

Now, the term to “seek the Lord,” I may say, *is the description of the life of the Christian*. When he lives as he should, his whole life is seeking the Lord. It is with this he begins. “Behold, he prayeth,” that is, he seeks the Lord. He has begun to be conscious of his sin, he is seeking pardon of the Lord. He has begun to be aware of his danger, he is seeking salvation in the Lord. He is now aware of his powerlessness, and he is looking for strength to the Lord. Those deep convictions, those cries and tears, those repentings and humblings, and, above all, those acts of simple confidence in which he casts himself upon the great atonement made upon Calvary’s bloody tree—those are all acts of seeking the Lord.

Now, perhaps, some of you have got no farther than this. Well, you shall have your proportion of blessing, according to your strength. You shall have your share in it, little as you are. He will give to His children at the table their portion, as well as to those who have grown to manhood.

After a man has attained unto eternal life by confiding in the Lord Jesus, he then goes on to seek the Lord in quite another way. No wonder, since he has found the Lord, or rather has been found of Him, and yet he still presses on to apprehend Him of whom he has been already apprehended. He still presses forward, seeking the Lord, and he seeks the Lord thus.

He seeks now *to know the Lord's mind*, the Lord's law and will. "Show me what thou wouldest have me to do," saith he. "Lord, I went by my own wit once, and I brought myself into a dark wood, I lost myself, I was at hell's brink, and thou didst save me, now, Lord, guide and direct me, be pleased to teach me, open my lips when I speak, guide my hands when I act, I wait at thy feet, feeling that—

*"For holiness no strength have I;
My strength is at Thy feet to lie."*

The man now seeks the Lord by daily and constant prayer, seeking that he may be upheld, guided, constrained, in paths of righteousness, and restrained from the ways of sin. He becomes a seeker of the Lord after sanctification, as once he was after justification. And then he becomes a seeker of the Lord in a further sense. He seeks to enjoy the Lord's love and His gracious fellowship and communion. He seeks to get near in reverent friendship to his Lord.

He now longs to grow up in the likeness of Christ, that his intercourse with the Father and the Son may be more close, more sweet, more continuous. He feels that God is his Father, and that he is no longer at a distance from Him in one sense, for he is made nigh by the blood of the cross. Yet sometimes he is oppressed with a sense of his old evil heart of unbelief, and in departure from the living God, and he cries out, "Draw me nearer to Thyself." In fact, his prayer always is—

*"Nearer my God to Thee,
Nearer to Thee:
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
Still all my cry shall be,
Nearer to Thee, nearer to Thee."*

He seeks the Lord's company. He delights to be in God's house, and at God's mercy seat, and at the foot of the cross, where God reveals Himself in all His glory. He is constantly crying for a larger capacity to receive more of God, and the longing of his soul is, "When shall I come and appear before God?" He feels that he never shall be satisfied till he awakes up in the Lord's likeness.

Now, all this, which may be private within him, and scarce known to any, operates practically in *an outward seeking of the Lord which makes the man's life to be sublime*. The genuine Christian lives for God. He makes the first object of all that he does the glory of God, the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, the showing forth of His praise, who has brought him out of darkness into marvellous light. He is a young man, an apprentice, he has been converted, and he says, "Now, what can I do while I am in this house to make it better, to make it happier and holier, that men may see what the religion of Jesus is? How can I recommend my Lord and Master to those among whom I dwell—to my master and my mistress, and my fellow servants?"

He becomes a tradesman on his own account, and when he opens that shop door he says, "I do not mean to trade for myself, I will make this to be my object, that this shall be God's shop, God has got to keep me, He has promised that He will, therefore, I may take what I want for the daily subsistence of myself and my children, but I will keep the shop for God for all that, and if He prospers me, I will give Him of my substance, but whatever comes of it, I will so trade across my counter, so keep those books,

and manage those bills, that I will let the world see what a Christian trader is, and I will seek thus to recommend my Lord and my God, and my object shall be to make Him famous.”

He seeks the Lord on Sundays. He desires at the Sunday school, or the preaching station, or anywhere he may serve, to be glorifying God. But he equally seeks Him on Mondays and other weekdays, for he believes there is a way of turning over calicoes, weighing pounds of tea, ploughing acres of land, driving a cart, or whatever else he may be called to do, by which he can honor God, and cause others to honor Him.

Now, I say very solemnly—I hope I am mistaken in what I say, but I fear I am not—I am afraid there are many professors who would tell a lie if they said that they sought God always in their business, for though they are the members of a church, and you would not find them out in anything seriously inconsistent, yet their whole life is inconsistent, because for a Christian to live for anything but the Lord Jesus Christ is inconsistent. It is inconsistent to the very root and core, to the tenor and aim, the supreme object of life, altogether inconsistent.

A man has a right to live, to bring up his family, to educate them and see them comfortably settled in life, but that ought to be only for God’s glory. That, he, acting as a father, is expected to do—for if a man careth not for his own household, he is worse than a heathen man and a publican—that God may be glorified by his doing his duty. But when I see some people putting by their thousands, and getting rich for no sort of reason that I know of, except that people may say “How much did he leave behind him?” how can I believe that those professors, as they take the sacramental cup, are doing anything but drinking condemnation unto themselves?

When I see some Christian men who profess to be living for nothing, but to be respectable, and to be known, and honored, and noticed, but never seem to care about the souls of men, nor about Christ’s glory, never shedding a tear over a dying sinner, nor heaving a sigh over this huge and wicked city, which is like a millstone upon the neck of some of us, like a nightmare perpetually upon our hearts—when I see these men so cold, so indifferent, so wrapped up in themselves, what can I think but that their religion is but cloak, a painted pageantry, for them to go to hell in, which shall be discovered at the last, and be a theme for the laughter of the fiends.

Oh! may God grant that we may all be able truly to say, “I seek the Lord, I am sure, I am certain that I seek Him,” for if we can feel that that is true, then we can take the promise of the text, if not, we may not touch it. If we, as professing Christians, are not at top and bottom, in heart, and soul, and spirit, and in all that we do, really seeking the glory of God, the promise does not belong to us, but if we can from our very souls declare, “Notwithstanding a thousand infirmities, yet, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee, and that I seek Thine honor,” then this is true of us, and no one of us shall want any good thing.

Just a word or two more about this, for we must discriminate thoroughly well before we come to the promise. It is too rich and precious to be bestowed upon the wrong persons, and there are some who hope to get this promise, who feel that they must not take it. We must be among those who seek the Lord heartily, not merely saying that we do, or wishing that we did, but, filled with the Holy Spirit, and in the power of His blessed residence in our souls, we must be panting after God’s glory heartily, otherwise I do not see that we can put our hands on the promise without presumption.

We must be seeking it honestly too, for there is a way of seeking God’s good and your own at the same time—I mean having a sinister and selfish motive. We may preach, and not be preaching only for God at all. A man may live in the Sanctuary, in holy engagements from morning until night, and yet may never ardently, intensely seek the Lord. A man may be a great giver to charities, a great attender at prayer meetings, a great doer of all kinds of Christian work, and yet he may never seek the Lord, but may yet be seeking to have his name known, to be noted as a generous man, or be merely seeking to get merit to himself, or self-complacency to his own conscience. It is a downright honest desire to serve and glorify God while we are here that is meant in the text. If we have got it—and I think we may readily see whether we have or not—then is the word of the Psalmist true to us.

We must seek God's glory heartily, honestly, and we must seek it most obediently. A man cannot say, "I am seeking God's glory," when he knows he is disobeying God's command in what he is doing. How can I say that I am desiring to glorify God by following a pursuit which is sinful, by giving loose to my anger, and speaking rashly, by giving rein to my passions, by indulging my own desires, by being proud and domineering over my fellow Christians, or by being pliant, fearful, timid after an unholy sort, and not being bold for God and for His truth? No, we must watch ourselves very narrowly and cautiously.

We must be very careful of our own spirits. We soon get off the line. Even when we are keeping correct outwardly, we may be getting very inconsistent inwardly by forgetting that the first, last, midst, and sole object of a blood-bought spirit is to live for Christ, and that if saints on earth were what they should be, they would be as constantly God's servants as the angels are in heaven, they would be as much messengers of God in their daily calling as the seraphs are before the eternal throne.

Oh! when will the Spirit of God lift us up to anything like this? The most of us are still hunting after things that will melt beneath the sun, or rot beneath the moon. We are gathering up shadows to ourselves, things which have no abiding substance, seeking self, seeking anything rather than the blessed God. Lord! forgive us this sin wherein we have fallen into it, and make us truly such as truly seek the Lord!

Now, let us be prepared to behold—

II. THE PROMISE OF THE REWARD OF SUCH SEEKING.

"They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." That is, *not one of them*. They that first stepped into Bethesda's pool were healed, and no others, but here everybody that steps into this pool is healed, that is to say, everyone that seeks the Lord has this promise—the least as well as the greatest, the Little-faiths and the Much-afraids as much as the Great-hearts and the Stand-fasts. They that seek the Lord, whether they are chimney sweeps or princes, whether they are tender children, or seasoned veterans in the Master's great army—they shall want no good thing.

"Well, but," somebody says, "there are some of them that are in want." They are in want? Yes, that may be, but they are not in want *of any good thing*. They cannot be. God's word against anything you say, or I say. If they seek the Lord, they shall not, they cannot, they must not want any good thing. "Well, at any rate, they want what appears to be a good thing." That is very likely, the text does not say they shall not be. "Well, but they want what they once found to be a good thing, they want health—is not that a good thing? It was a good thing to them when they had it before, yet they want health, does not that go against the text?" No, it does not in any way whatever.

The text means this, that anything which is absolutely good for him, all circumstances being considered, no child of God shall ever want. I met with this statement in a work by that good old Puritan, Mr. Clarkson, which stuck by me when I read it some time ago.

I think the words were these, "If it were a good thing for God's people for sin, Satan, sorrow, and affliction to be abolished, Christ would blot them out within five minutes, and if it were a good thing for the seeker of the Lord to have all the kingdoms of this world put at his feet, and for him to be made a prince, Jesus would make him a prince before the sun rose again." If it were absolutely to him, all things being considered, a good thing, he must have it, for Christ would be sure to keep His word. He has said he shall not want it, and He would not let His child want it, whatever it might be, if it were really, absolutely, and in itself, all things considered, a good thing.

Now, taking God's Word and walking by faith towards it, what a light it sheds on your history and mine! There are many things for which I wish, and which I sincerely think to be good, but I say at once, "If I have not got them, they are not good, for if they were good, good for me, and I am truly seeking God, I should have them, if they were good things, my heavenly Father would not deny them to me, He has said He would not, and I believe His pledged word."

I think sometimes it would be a good thing for me if I had more talents, but if it were a good thing I should have more, I should have them. You think it were a good thing, if you were to have more money.

Well, if He saw it to be good, you would have it. “Oh!” say you “but it would have been a good thing if my poor mother had been spared to me, if she had been alive now, it would have been a good thing, and it would be a good thing certainly for us to be in the position I was five years ago before these terrible panic times came.”

Well, if it had been a good thing for you to have been there, you would have been there. “I don’t see it,” says one. Well, do not expect to see it, but believe it. We walk by faith, not by sight. But the text says so. It says not that every man shall have every good thing, but it does say that every man that seeks the Lord shall have every good thing. He shall not want any good thing, be it what it may. “Well, I doubt it,” says one. Very well, I do not wonder that you do, for your father Adam doubted it, and that is how the whole race fell.

Adam and Eve were in the garden, and they might have felt quite sure that their heavenly Father would not deny them any good thing, but the devil came and whispered, and said to them, “God doth know that in the day you eat of the fruit of that tree you will be as gods, that fruit is very good for you, a wonderfully good thing, never anything like it, and that one good thing God has kept away from you.” “Oh!” said Eve, “then I will get it,” and down we all fell.

The race was ruined through their doubting the promise. If they had continued to seek the Lord, they would not have wanted any good thing. That fruit was not a good thing to them, it might have been good in itself, but it was not good to them, or else God would have given it to them, and their doubting it brought all this terrible sorrow on us.

So it will upon you, for let me show you—you say, perhaps, “It would be a very good thing for me to be rich.” God has stopped you up many times. You have never prospered when you thought you were going to. You will put out your hand, perhaps, to do a wrong thing to be rich, but if you say, “No, I will work, and toil, and do what I can, but if I am not prospered, it is not a good thing for me to be prospered, and I would not do a wrong thing, if it would bring me all the prosperity that heart could desire,” then you will walk uprightly, and God will bless you.

But if you begin to doubt it and say, “That is a good thing, and my heavenly Father does not give it to me,” you will, first of all, get hard and bitter thoughts against your heavenly Father, and then you will get wicked thoughts and wrong desires, and these will lead you to do wrong things, and God’s name will be greatly dishonored thereby.

How do you know what is a good thing for you? “Oh! I know,” says one. That is just what your child said last Christmas. He was sure it was a good thing for him to have all those sweets, he thought you very hard that you denied them to him, and yet you knew better. You had seen him before so made ill through those very things he now longed for. And your heavenly Father knows, perhaps, that you could not bear to be strong in body, you would never be holy if you had too robust health. He knows you could not endure to be wealthy, you would be proud, vain, perhaps wicked, you do not know how bad you might be if you had this, perhaps.

He has put you in the best place for you. He has given you not only some of the things that are good for you, but all that is good for you, and there is nothing in the world that is really, solidly, abidingly good for you, but you either have it now, or you shall have it ere long. God your Father is dealing with you in perfect wisdom and perfect love, and though your reason may begin to cavil and question, yet your faith should sit still at His feet and say, “I believe it; I believe it, even though my heart is wrung with sorrow, I am a seeker of God, I do seek His glory, and I shall not want any good thing.”

Methinks someone in the congregation might say to me, “Look at the martyrs, did not they seek the Lord above all men?” Truly so, but what were you about to object? “Why, that they wanted many good things, they were in prison, sometimes in cold, and nakedness, and hunger, they were on the rack tormented, many of them went to heaven from the fiery stake.” Yes, but they never wanted any good thing.

It would not have been a good thing to them as God’s martyrs to have suffered less, for now read their history. The more they suffered, the brighter they shine. Rob them of their sufferings and you strip

their crowns of their gems. Who are the brightest before the eternal throne? Those who suffered most below.

If they could speak to you now, they would tell you that that noisome dungeon was, because it enabled them to glorify God, a good thing to them. They would tell you that the rack whereon they did sing sweet hymns of praise was a good thing for them, because it enabled them to show forth the patience of the saints, and to have their names written in the book of the peerage of the skies. They would tell you that the fiery stake was a good thing, because from that pulpit they preached Christ after such a fashion as men could never have heard it from cold lips and stammering tongues.

Did not the world perceive that the suffering of the saints were good things, for they were the seed of the church? They helped to spread the truth, and because God would not deny them any good thing He gave them their dungeons, He gave them their racks, He gave them their stakes, and these were the best things they could have had, and with enlarged reason, and with their mental faculties purged, those blessed spirits would now choose again, could they live over again, to have suffered those things. They would choose, were it possible, to have lived the very life, and to have endured all they braved, to have received so glorious a reward as they now enjoy.

“Ah! well, then,” says one, “I see I really have not understood a great deal that has happened to me, I have been in obscurity, lost my friends, been despised, felt quite broken down, do you mean to tell me that that has been a good thing?” I do. God has blessed it to you. He will enable you to say, “Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy law.” And if you get more grace, you will say it is a good thing, for is it not a good thing for you to be conformed to the likeness of Christ? How can you be, if you have no suffering? If you never suffer with Him, how can you expect to reign with Him? How are you to be made like Him in His humiliation, if you never are humbled?

Why, methinks every pain that shoots through the frame and thrills the sensitive soul, helps us to understand what Christ suffered, and being sanctified, gives us the power to pass through the rent veil, and to be baptized with His baptism, and in our measure to drink of His cup, and therefore, it becomes a good thing, and our Father gives it us, because His promise is that He will not deny or withhold any good thing from those that walk uprightly.

I feel, brethren, as though my text were too full for me to go on with it, there is such a mass in it, and if you will take it home and turn it over at your leisure, you may do with it better than I can, if I attempt wire-drawing and word-spinning. There is the text. It seems to me to speak as plainly as the English tongue can speak. Give yourselves up to God wholly, and live for Him, and you shall never want anything that is really good for you, your life shall be the best life for you, all things considered in the light of eternity, that a life could have been.

Only mind you keep to this—the seeking of the Lord. There is the point of it. Get out of that, and there may be some promise for you, but certainly not this one. You have got out of the line of the promise, but keep to that and seek the Lord, and your life shall be, even if it be a poverty stricken one, such a life that if you could have the infinite intelligence of your heavenly Father, you would ordain it to be precisely as it now is. “They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

Why, how rich this makes the poor! How content this makes the suffering! How grateful this makes the afflicted! How does it make our present state to glow with an unearthly glory! But brethren, we shall never understand this text fully this side of heaven. There we shall see it in splendor. They that seek the Lord here shall have up yonder all that imagination can picture, all that fancy could conceive, all that desire could create. You shall have more than eye hath seen, or ear hath ever heard. You shall have capacities to receive of the divine fullness, and the fullness of the pleasures that are with God for evermore shall be yours.

But again I come back to that, are you seeking the Lord? That is a question I have asked my own heart many and many a time—Do I seek the Lord’s glory in all things? I ask it of you, you young men who are starting in business. Now, you know you can if you like go into business for yourselves, I mean

you can make your trade tell for yourselves, and live to yourselves, and the end will be miserable, and the way to it will not be happy.

But if God's Spirit shall help you young men and women early in life to give your hearts to Jesus, and to say, "Now, God has made us, we will serve Him that made us, Christ has bought us, we will serve Him that bought us, the Spirit of God has given us a new life, we will live for this new and quickening Spirit"—then I do not stand here to promise you ease and comfort, for in the world you shall have tribulation, but I do say in God's name that He will not withhold one good thing from you, and that when you come to be with Him forever and ever you will bless Him that He did for you the best that could be done even by infinite wisdom and infinite love. You shall have the best life that could be lived, the best mercies that could be given, and the best of all good things shall be yours here and hereafter.

There may be some here, however, who have long passed the days of youth, and up till now have never had a thought of their Maker. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but they have not known God. If you keep a dog, he fawns on you, and follows at your heels. There is scarcely any creature so ignorant but what it knows its keeper. Go to the Zoological Gardens and see if those animals that are most deficient in brain are not still obedient to those that feed them.

Yet here is God, good and kind to a man like you, and you have lived to be forty, and have never had an idea of loving and serving God. Are you lower sunk than the brutes? Think of that! But Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners such as you. Repent! May God's Eternal Spirit lead you to repentance of this great sin of having lived in neglect of God, and from henceforth, seeking pardon for the past through the atoning sacrifice, and strength for the future through the Divine Spirit, seek the Lord, and you shall find that you shall not want any good thing. The Lord bring you there and save and bless you eternally! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 34

"A psalm of David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed."

It was a very painful exhibition, and one in which David does not shine, but in which, nevertheless, the providence and grace of God are very conspicuous, and it is very pleasant to find a man of God penning such words as these after his escape.

Verse 1. *I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

After any very great deliverance we feel prompted to special gratitude, and it appears to us as if we never should leave off praising God. I wish that perpetuity were real, but alas! it often happens that the next cloud that sweeps the skies brings back our doubting, and our fearing, and our song is over. It ought not so to be. Our heart's resolve should be, "I will bless the LORD at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

2. *My soul shall make her boast in the LORD:*

What is there else to boast about? But what a proper subject for boasting the Lord is, because it is legitimate boasting? We can never exaggerate—we can never speak too well or think too well—of God. He is high above our thoughts, when they are at the best, so that we may make them as big as we may, and we shall never be guilty of extravagance here.

2. *The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.*

Humble souls cannot, generally, endure boasting, but boasting in God is very sweet to them. He that will make God great will always be a choice favorite with a broken spirit. Those that are little in themselves delight to hear of the glory of God.

3. *O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

It is too grand a theme for one. One little heart can scarcely feel it all One feeble tongue cannot tell it out. Come, then, ye saints that know His name, magnify the Lord with me.

4. *I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

Blessed be His name for this. Are there not many of you, dear friends, who can bear the same testimony—personal proof of a prayer hearing God? You tried Him, for you sought Him. You tried Him, and you found Him true, for He delivered you from all your fears.

5. *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*

Only a look, and their burden was gone. Only a look! What great things hang on little things! Faith is but a look, yet it brings life, pardon, salvation. Heaven comes that way. Only a look!

6-7. *This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

The angel of the Lord does not merely come to help His people, but He stays with them. He encampeth. He has pitched His tent, for He means to tarry. The guardians of God forsake not their charge. They encamp about them that fear Him, for their deliverance.

8. *O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

It is the grandest of benedictions. It is the sum and substance of the Gospel. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” By the way of works we are cursed, but by the way of believing we are blest. Are you trusting? Dear heart, are you trusting? Is it a feeble trust? Are you often much tried and distressed? Yet if you are trusting, you are blessed. God pronounces you so, and do not let your faith waver about it, or suffer the Devil to tell you that you are accursed, for you cannot be. You are blessed.

9. *O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.*

Sometimes their wishes are not granted, but there is no real want. They shall have all necessities, if they do not have all luxuries.

10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger:*

Strong as they are, and crafty as they are, they howl, because of their hunger, sometimes.

10. *But they that seek the LORD—*

Though they have no craft, and no courage, and no strength, and no foresight.

10. *Shall not want any good thing.*

Plead that, tried child of God. Plead it, plead it. If you are in want tonight—if you are in any form of need—plead this gracious word.

11. *Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*

A Sunday school teacher’s text. Gather the children close to you. Say, “Come near me. I would be familiar with you.” It was a king who spoke these words, and yet He delighted to say, “Come ye children.” Win their attention. “Hearken unto me.” If they do not hear, how shall they understand? “And I will teach you the fear of the LORD.” That is your subject—pure religion—heart religion—spiritual religion. “I will teach you the fear of the LORD.”

12. *What man is he that desireth life,—*

What man is he that does not desire life? Love of it is innate in us all.

12-13. *And loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*

He begins with one of the hardest practical duties of the fear of God, for he that bridleth his tongue is able also be bridle the whole body. The tongue is such an unruly member that if that be kept—and only through grace can it be so—then we may be quite certain that all the other organs and faculties will be kept too.

14. *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

A great deal packed away into a small compass there. There is the negative “Depart from evil,” and the positive which must go with it, “Do good.” And if you do not do good, you will soon do evil. And then there is that blessed precept, “Seek peace.” Hunt after it, if you cannot spy it out, and if it runs away from you, follow it—pursue it—hunt after it till you gain it. A peaceable life is a happy life.

15. *The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous,—*

He watches them. He loves them too well to let them ever be out of His sight. He views them with complacency. He regards them with affection. “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous.”

15. *And his ears are open unto their cry.*

Ready to hear their feeblest prayer—the cry of their pain—their distress. His ears are always open.

16. *The face of the LORD is against them that do evil,—*

Sets His face against them.

16-17. *To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

Here is an explanation of the experience of the believer—first, prayer, then God’s hearing, and then deliverance. Who would not pray who has found prayer to be so effectual with God?

18-19. *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.*

The first line seemed to have something terrible in it, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous,” but there is a blessed “but” that comes in—thrown like the tree into Marah’s bitter stream to sweeten it all.

20-21. *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked:*

Their own evil shall be their destruction. They need nothing more than to be suffered to go on in sin. Sin is hell. The fire of corruption is the fire of perdition. Evil shall slay the wicked.

21-23. *And they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

How grandly does David preach the Gospel! We need not look to Paul to learn salvation by faith. The psalms are full of it. We have had it just before. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in him,” and now, again, “None of them that trust in him shall be desolate.” They are sinful, but they shall not be desolate. They often feel as if they were utterly unworthy, but they shall not be desolate. They are, sometimes downcast, but they shall not be desolate. They may be hunted by trials, and afflictions, and temptations of the devil, but they shall not be desolate. They may come to the bed of pain, and to the chamber of death, but they shall not be desolate. They shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, but they shall not be desolate—not one of them, for it is written, “None of them that trust in him shall be desolate.”

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